

Knowledge for Change

IN RURAL POVERTY AND DEVELOPMENT

2010 / 2013





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Table of contents

P.07	BACKGROUND: Policy dialogue for more prosperous and equal rural territories
P.08	MAIN PROJECT GUIDELINES: Policy dialogue, policy analysis and technical assistance to overcome rural poverty in Latin America
P.10	• The four Rural Dialogue Groups (RDGs) formed
P.11	• RDG Mexico: Prominent public figures committed to a proposal
P.12	• RDG El Salvador: Civil Society and Government Organizations
P.14	• RDG Colombia: A space for technical and academic exchanges to create better public policies
P.15	• RDG Ecuador: An exchange with a variety of actors to highlight
P.16	RURAL DIALOGUE GROUPS: Contributing to public-policy change to overcome rural poverty
P.16	• Mexico: Focusing on the electoral process
P.19	• El Salvador: A dialogue process with strong territorial content
P.22	• Colombia: The right to land and peace
P.24	• Ecuador: Improving the quality of life in rural communities
P.26	• Rural Dialogue Groups - Incidence results
P.27	• RDG's and IFAD's work in all four countries
P.28	INTERVIEW WITH TOMÁS ROSADA: The RDG's greatest success was achieving incidence
P.33	2011 Latin American report on poverty and inequality
P.33	• Poverty and extreme inequality concentrate in rural territories in Latin America
P.35	• Report launch and dissemination
P.39	TOOLS FOR IMPLEMENTING A DIALOGUE STRATEGY: Policy analysis, communications and evaluation
P.39	• Publications and working papers
P.41	• Communications for policy dialogue
P.42	• Media presence: Highlights
P.43	• Monitoring and Evaluation
P.44	Project team



Results from three years work have been thoroughly satisfactory. There are several policies benefiting poor rural communities in the region, including the Law of Land and Rural Development in Colombia, the Development Strategy for the Coastal Areas in El Salvador, or the Strategy for Rural Well-being in Ecuador.

BACKGROUND

Policy dialogue for more prosperous and equal rural territories

M. Ignacia Fernández G.
(Assistant Coordinator)

Latin America is a region with enormous social gaps. Even though some social indicators have been improved across population, there still are many places significantly behind, especially in rural areas.

Faced with the pressing urgency to deal with rural and inequality issues, and the apparent lack of solutions, the last few decades have seen the emergence of new people's demands. These demands relate to the democratization of spaces for decision – making and policy implementation. The need does not only arise among the population but also among international organizations concerned with development and with the need to strengthen public-policy incidence as a mechanism for promoting results beyond just financing programs.

Policy dialogue is a politic alternative that is implemented and promoted as an answer to the increasing demand for participation in public matters. This mechanism seeks to influence public-policy design and implementation through promoting dialogue among actors coming from political, academic, business and civil-society spheres.

Within this framework, 2010 welcomed the launching of the project “Knowledge for Change in Rural Poverty and Development” in Mexico, El Salvador, Colombia and Ecuador. The Project was financed by the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) and the International Development Research Center – Canada (IDRC) and implemented by Rimisp-Latin American Center for Rural Development (Latin American Center for Rural Development). The project's objective was to improve the standing



of rural poverty and development in the national political agenda. The strategy is focus on connecting the rural poverty theme to other high-priority issues in the national agenda.

Therefore, Rural Dialogue Groups (RDG) was created in each country, by including an executive secretary and a group of individuals, influential figures coming from (20 - 30) social organizations, the business sector, intellectuals, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and the government. These members show a true interest in participating in the dialogue process because they see in it such an opportunity to leverage strengths in order to place relevant issues in the public agenda that often does not include them. Each RDG defined a priority agenda and identified specific change objectives in rural policies according to the conditions and strategic priorities of each country.

Results from three years work have been thoroughly satisfactory. Where RDGs have left a sign, we can confidently say that there are several policies benefiting poor rural communities in the region, including the Law of Land and Rural Development in Colombia, the Development Strategy for the Coastal Areas in El Salvador, or the Strategy for Rural Well-being in Ecuador.

The Project also achieved a second key objective for the continuity of ongoing activities. It consists in the validation of public-policy dialogue as an alternative mechanism for sectors interested on participating and connecting with public agendas in each country, in order to include their views, arguments and priorities in the design and implementation of public policies. This does not only answer to the motives of specific political groups but also to those of a greater and more diverse majority. Finally, but not less important, the project showed that policy dialogue can be an effective tool for organizations such as IFAD to highlight their priority issues on the national political agenda.

We hope that the implementation of the Project “Knowledge for Change in Rural Poverty and Development” becomes an inspiration for the creation of additional initiatives of this kind of tools. Rimisp will continue to work on strengthening the RDGs in each country, expecting that this initiative can spread through others with similar goals and looking for to find alternative solutions to overcome rural poverty and promote territorial development.



MAIN PROJECT GUIDELINES:

Policy dialogue, policy analysis and technical assistance to overcome rural poverty in Latin America

“The Project Knowledge for Change in Rural Poverty and Development seeks to contribute to the creation of policies, strategies and investments focusing on overcoming rural poverty in Mexico, El Salvador, Colombia and Ecuador”

In Latin America, high poverty rates continue to exist mostly concentrated in the region’s rural territories. Concerned with this reality, Rimisp-Latin American Center for Rural Development decided to work on an influential strategy that would promote policy dialogue as a mechanism to address rural poverty. With the support of the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) and the International Development Research Center - Canada (IDRC), the Project “Knowledge for Change in Rural Poverty and Development” was launched. The Project’s main objective was to establish a mechanism for policy dialogue that would contribute to improve strategies, policies and national and sub-national investment targeting rural poverty in Mexico, El Salvador, Colombia and Ecuador in order to highlight rural poverty and development analysis and proposals in the national political agenda of these countries.

The Project organizes in several lines of work. The first one included the creation of coalitions in order to gather people and institutions interested in participating in the development of knowledge

and dialogue processes to influence rural strategies and policies. This strategy materialized in the creation of the Rural Dialogue Groups (RDGs) as well as in the creation of regional and local governmental networks taking into account territorial dynamics specific to each country. Each RDG implemented its own dialogue strategy centered on relevant policy priorities in order to facilitate a constructive discussion of issues and to contribute to and influence strategies, policies and investments designed to overcome rural poverty.

A second line of work focused on policy analysis in order to increase knowledge and learn more about rural poverty and inequality across countries. The goal was to inform the dialogue process with technical contributions derived from existing research or created specifically for these purposes.

A third line of work was to provide support in policy implementation with the goal of creating the necessary conditions to go beyond analysis and dialogue. The goal was to support the design and implementation of public policies currently carried out from new government decisions that were influenced by the recommendations and contributions of the RDGs.

The RDGs began their work believing that dialogue is a useful and influential strategy for changing the political agenda. Each group has been answering with a variety of strategies and actions depending on their different national realities, contingencies and scenarios, while at the same time using the dialogue tool for the same goal in mind: overcoming rural poverty. There are certain common characteristics shared by the RDGs key in explaining the dialogue processes overtaken:

- Each RDG was called together by a government institution and another one linked to the academic or civil-society sector. The composition of the group is unique. It includes not only institutions but also public figures recognized for their role as

academics or intellectuals; business people or representatives from the private sector; NGOs or foundations members as well as from rural organizations; government authorities or public-policy consultants and politicians. Whose interests in rural poverty and development issues allow to participate in policy-dialogue processes and to share their knowledge. RDG members have taken the Project as an opportunity to join forces and push for the inclusion of relevant issues in the public agenda that commonly does not prioritize rural issues.

- RDGs were made up of a variable number of between 20 to 30 figures with significant levels of incidence who defined themselves a priority agenda based on existing public-agenda issues in each country and identified specific change objectives associated with rural policies.
- An Executive Secretary coordinates each RDG. This person is an autonomous and independent member with the ability to lead policy dialogue processes, closely connected to the political groups, a positive approach to decision makers, and recognized both at the government level and among the various political coalitions in his/her country because of his/her experience in issues of rural poverty and development.



Policy dialogue is a process with a main and clear objective to inform and influence changes to the political agenda, to the design and implementation of public policies, or to the processes used to define the political agenda or its specific policies. The political agenda is the set of real State priorities (realized through, for example, public spending) and its organizations and agents in a particular moment and space. Fernández, Berdegúe and Rosada, 2011.

“The political dialogue must go beyond discussion of a project or projects. It is necessary for countries to work in a true development process for the creation of national plans with a real commitment to the rural sector so that it receives resources of every kind: technical assistance, attention and opportunities. In Latin America we have to take millions of families out of poverty and that can only happen through a joint public-policy dialogue that includes the government, general population, private-sector actors, members of territorial organizations and anyone else who wants join”. Josefina Stubbs, Director, Latin American and the Caribbean Division, IFAD, in Fernández, Berdegúe and Rosada, 2011.



The four Rural Dialogue Groups (RDGs) formed

The RDGs have not only been able to influence public policy in the respective countries, but have also succeeded in generating opportunities for dialogue between its members, the Managers IFAD Program and national governments, facilitating the creation of new partnerships and projects.

Mexico.

The work has been focused on creating proposals for overcoming rural poverty in the country. The goal was to present these proposals to presidential election candidates at the end of 2012 in order to secure their commitment to work on moving in the direction outlined by the proposals.

El Salvador.

It has focused on various issues related to rural poverty and its territorial and cultural circumstances, specifically in the coastal areas, sugar cane cultivation and the green harvest, and the impacts of climate change.

Colombia.

RDG has worked in various areas of rural development, highlighting its participation in the processes known as the National Development Plan, the Land and Rural Development Law, and the peace dialogues between the government and FARC.

Ecuador.

It focused first on supporting the design and implementation of the national strategy for Rural Good Living. Later, in early 2012, it focused on issues such as the importance of improving education in rural territories and in proposing productivity-improvement strategies in the banana, rice, hard corn and cocoa bean industries.

RDG Mexico:

Prominent public figures committed to a proposal

RDG Mexico was created in January 19, 2011. Its Executive Secretary was José Antonio Mendoza, Engineer and former Rural Development Sub-secretary for the federal Department of Agriculture, Livestock and Rural Development, Fishing and Food (SAGARPA in Spanish). The convening organizations were the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México (UNAM), under the leadership of its president José Narro Robles, and SAGARPA, led at that time by Francisco Mayorga, Castañeda.

The Group, composed of well-known business, academic, social and union leaders, among other public figures, set as a main objective to generate concrete proposals oriented toward overcoming rural poverty in Mexico. These proposals will be analyzed and then presented to authorities, political actors and candidates as part of the electoral process in 2012. The more than 40 members of RDG Mexico showed total agreement in that the focus and challenge to overcome rural poverty in the country deserved and demanded agreements, dialogues and the willingness of a variety of contributors with the ability to influence the public agenda.

To get on with its work, the group was requested to their members to analyze, update and expand several aspects of rural poverty, including an historical overview of programmes created to overcome rural poverty in Mexico. These analyses are as following: a diagnosis of rural poverty; a review of the effects and relevance of subsidies; the effects

of poverty on the social fabric and the rural and indigenous family structure; the institutionalism from which poverty is addressed; and, the proposals to confront this problem. The resulting reports became the main source used by RDG Mexico to build several proposals. These proposals are so based on the fact rural poverty in Mexico has a heterogeneous, multi-dimensional and multi-factorial character and that people affected by rural poverty are highly vulnerable.

For three years, RDG Mexico implemented a successful strategy to create synergies with other national institutions from a variety of sectors, always with the strategic goal to promote the policy-dialogue process. This dynamic allowed establishing connections with Rural Development committees in the Senate and the House, with the group “Mexico and the Crisis: Toward a New Development Path” (México frente a la crisis: hacia un nuevo curso de desarrollo); with the Permanent Agrarian Congress (CAP in Spanish); with the National Farmers Confederation; with the Cardenista Farmer Center (CCC); with the Mexican Association of Secretaries for Agricultural Development (AMSDA in Spanish); with Dreams of Rural Women (SUDEMUR in Spanish); with the University Seminar for Social Issues (SUCS in Spanish), and with the National Council for the Evaluation of Social Development Policies (Coneval in Spanish), among other relevant actors.



The Experiences of RDG Mexico Members

“For 100 years, the rural population has centered in the same states in the Republic, in the southeast, where rural life is still prevalent. (...) Poverty has a rural and indigenous face. (...) Mexico is the second country with the highest poverty rate among its indigenous groups. We are a highly unequal nation. (...) To address rural poverty is not only ethically urgent but also a mechanism to accelerate national development and to achieve this equitably.”

José Antonio Mendoza, Executive Secretary, RDG Mexico.

“The work being done by this Group could not be timelier. (...) Rest assured this work will be taken into consideration by the incoming Administration during its public-policy design process.”

Enrique De la Madrid, RDG Member and current Director of the National Foreign Investment Bank (Bancomext in Spanish).



RDG El Salvador:
Civil Society and Government Organizations come together against rural poverty and inequality

The Rural Dialogue Group in El Salvador is created on January 27, 2011 and its first Executive Secretary is Nelson Cuéllar, Economist and Researcher at the Salvadorian Programme for Development and Environmental Research (PRISMA in Spanish) Foundation. Starting in 2012, Sociologist Ileana Gómez, from the same institution, replaces Mr. Cuéllar. RDG El Salvador is convened by PRISMA together with the Technical Secretariat of the Presidency (STP in Spanish) and the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock (MAG in Spanish). The Ministry of the Environment and Natural Resources (MARN in Spanish) joined later on.

This RDG represented a pioneering experience for policy-dialogue in the country. Therefore, it has been part of important dialogue spaces on rural poverty due to special circumstances for the country: after several decades, a new political party was now in power and over 30% of the population was living in poverty.

The Group has made great efforts to recognize and understand the interventions of small, medium and large investors as it relates to territorial dynamics. It has focused on generating valuable information in order to contribute to strategic thinking on territorial development, although it has also functioned as a space for the distribution and discussion of relevant studies prepared by other organizations.

RDG El Salvador includes important national political representatives, academics from university and research institutes, and members of international organizations and public institutions. Its thematic focus is oriented toward analyzing and proposing concrete strategies to overcome rural poverty on the coastal areas. In this region, a permanent Board of actors from Bajo Lempa has been effort to achieve a local discussion to improve participation of the local people living in poverty. It focus on people from cultivation and harvest of sugar cane and mitigate the impact of climate change in the country. El Salvador is one of the most vulnerable countries to natural phenomena, recently hit with hard tropical storms and earthquakes.

The RDG has become a space for the technical discussion of governmental projects on poverty and rural development. The Group has analyzed the Family Agriculture Plan, whose objective is to reduce rural poverty levels through the generation of income and well-being among families that practice family agriculture, the Program Fomilenio II, an initiative with the U.S. for infrastructure, human capital and improvements to the investment climate, and various other policies pro-rural women and rural community tourism.

The Experiences of RDG El Salvador Members

The RDG is “an uncommon organism that can serve as a model to create other working groups.” In the RDG “we have had the chance to be heard and found opportunities to complement our work with other organizations that also focus on Salvadorian territories”.
Carolina Dreikorn, PNUD El Salvador.

“The RDG is a participative space for analysis and reflection in which we learn to collectively identify and support findings of sensitive national issues and to present strategies to address them”.
Américo Hidalgo, Technical Secretariat of the Presidency.

“... to learn and share everyday life stories of men and women of all ages and backgrounds. They are the ones that the Group considers the main protagonists when designing strategies to improve their lives (...) To learn about the day-to-day experiences of those living in rural poverty was invaluable for the project team in El Salvador. We were able to sharpen our public-policy proposals and consider details that sometimes are not prioritized when reviewing and analyzing data and statistics”.
Ileana Gómez, Executive Secretary - RDG El Salvador.





RDG Colombia:

A space for technical and academic exchanges to create better public policies

RDG Colombia starts on December 23, 2010. Its Executive Secretary is Santiago Perry, Industrial Engineer and Economist, former Vice Minister of Agriculture, and current Executive Director of the Corporation for the Participative and Sustainable Development of Small Rural Producers (Corporación PBA in Spanish).

The Rural Dialogue Group was convened by Colombia's Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development and by PBA Corporation. Since its inception, the Group has maintained an important dynamic of reflection and contribution to understanding serious rural issues in the country. The main objective put forth by the Group was to become a useful tool in analyzing the various themes related to rural poverty, an area in which some of the most serious and transcendental problems in Colombia are concentrated.

The Group has brought together prominent personalities from the Colombian rural sector, creating an atmosphere of dialogue and consensus with the goal of positioning key ideas to improve the reality in Colombia's rural communities.

The heterogeneous and pluralist make up of the RDG—with actors from sectors such as academia, production unions, government and civil society—has been, without a doubt, one of the factors contributing to its success. Many times, Group members spoke positively of having a diversity of points of view.

At the early stage of the commitment, RDG Colombia decided to divide into two sub-groups with the goal of leveraging the strengths and special skills of its members: on one hand one sub-group focused on examining institutional dilemmas and on the other hand other sub-group focuses on income generation in the rural sector. However, the fact that a new bill on land and rural development was being promoted led to both groups coming together to become one again. In this way, members were able to use their joint expertise and knowledge to support the formulation of the bill.

The meetings brought together representatives from key organisms related to Colombia's rural institutions, such as the Department for Social Prosperity, the Colombian Institute for Rural Development (INCODER in Spanish) or the Director of the upcoming National Agricultural Census. Experts on relevant issues were invited by including Andy Jarvis, from CGIAR, who shared the results of his work measuring the impact of climate change on Colombia's agricultural sector, and Pablo Ruiz, renowned expert on environmental issues.

The Group implemented several strategies to contact with those who have faced rural poverty. Members met in person with small agricultural producers and farming communities, among others. In 2012, for example, the Group visited the department of Santander to witness firsthand the important effect the cooperative movement has had on

The Experiences of RDG Colombia Members

"The fact that some issues are discussed within the Group and that its membership is of people with different perspectives and approaches, who has contributed to the discussion of a variety of issues—including some uncomfortable ones—, and this information has then be taken and promoted within each member's working environment." There is no doubt that "the consensus process inside the RDG has contributed to bringing people together and building societal consensus."

Santiago Perry, RDG Colombia's Executive Secretary.

"This work with the Rural Dialogue Group has led to a process in which policy decisions that are made or will be made by the federal government are being reviewed and analyzed together with the private sector for their implementation."

Nohora Iregui, Rural Development Director at the Ministry of Agriculture, Colombia.

territorial development. There were also conferences in Bogota with rural leaders and small producers, including one with coffee producers from the departments of Cauca and Magdalena, and those organized with strawberry producers from Sabana de Bogotá.

The RDG has also created alliances and collaborations with the private sector and social organizations. Colombia's Society of Farmers (SAC in Spanish) has become an important ally with who has created several activities. The most prominent being an International Workshop on Rural Poverty that the RDG organized as an official academic program during the 2012 SAC Congress focuses on rural poverty in Brazil and South Africa.



RDG Ecuador:

An exchange with a variety of actors to highlight key rural development issues



RDG Ecuador created on December 8, 2010 and convened by the Coordinating Ministry of Social Development (MCDS in Spanish) and Rimisp-Ecuador. The group is led by the renowned Sociologist and former Vice Minister of Agriculture and Livestock, Manuel Chiriboga, as Executive Secretary. It is a diverse group that has been gathering strength since it was first created. By June 2011, it already had over 40 members.

The Group's work is been organized bases on a series of meetings on a variety of issues and in which over 100 people have participated, from permanent members to guests. Each dialogue meeting is characterized by the free participation of representatives from academia, the national and local public sectors, private enterprises, exporting agricultural industries, social organizations, non-governmental organizations, and producer unions

from the highlands, coastal and Amazon areas, among others.

Agricultural issues have been the main working topics for the Group, and their significance in economic and social development, agricultural institutions, improvements to rural educations, sustainable production chains, and the importance of research and innovation in this field. The member's active participation has brought attention to experiences from NGOs, universities, producer associations, and people involved in agriculture and exports, who at the same time have allowed the Group to participate and increase the dialogue process. RDG Ecuador has highlighted talking about rural life beyond agriculture to include the standard of living of farming communities, their local capacity to launch productive ventures, and the urgency of upholding their rights and access to education, health and other services.

The Experiences of RDG Ecuador Members

The Group has included in its political dialogue agenda and proposals a wide range of issues focused on the rural reality in Ecuador. *"The possibility of providing options and proposing public-policy actions for the rural world strengthened the ability of RDG Ecuador to provide political and technical advice as the executor of one of the points of view that the Project entails."*

Manuel Chiriboga, Executive Secretary, RDG Ecuador.

"The RDG could facilitate relationships between producers and exporters. (...) Now, it is a wide space for policy analysis in general and of strategies and proposals, but later on it might be able to act as intermediary in specific situations."

Javier Ponce, Minister of Agriculture, Livestock, Aquaculture and Fishing.

Those who had made the Group's stability possible are its members, *"because they have suggested innovative proposals and are committed to helping perfect public policy and to identify bottlenecks."* Manuel Chiriboga, Executive Secretary, RDG Ecuador.



RURAL DIALOGUE GROUPS:

Contributing to public-policy change to overcome rural poverty

The Rural Dialogue Groups have implemented policy-dialogue processes oriented toward influencing decision-making process at national and local levels. The Project has achieved concrete results in contributing to policy and action design that seek to improve the quality of life in the rural sectors.

Mexico:

Focusing on the electoral process

“It is relevant to address rural issues to an expanded and inclusive perspective and not only as it has been done until now, with a sectoral and rural perspective.” José Antonio Mendoza, Executive Secretary, RDG Mexico.

The most important result from the work carried out by RDG Mexico was the publication of a book, “Knowledge for Change in Rural Poverty and Development: Elements for Policy Building” that offers several proposals from the Group in regards to public policies on how to overcome rural poverty and move toward development.

The proposal was internally presented to members of RDG Mexico in November 2012 and later distributed to authorities at SAGARPA and the Ministry of Social Development SEDESOL as well as legislators at the national Congress connected to the rural sector, and to ministers of agricultural and social development in states across the country.

Long term National Strategy

“Knowledge for Change in Rural Poverty and Development: Elements for the Construction of Policies” defines several concrete proposals for policies on social development, production programme promotion for rural development, climate change and food crisis. The Group proposes specific policies to address these issues to be explicitly included in a long-term national strategy, “in order to promote generalized economic growth, ongoing and with job generation and decent salaries, and also oriented toward creating a State able to guarantee social rights that its population demands. Macro-economic and social policies determine, without a doubt, the work and the future of the territory and rural society.”

“A national economy with a high rate of growth and sustainability is a compulsory condition in order to reduce poverty, but it won’t be enough if it is not widespread and if job growth happens though informal economy; it also won’t be enough if poverty, social and territorial inequalities are not reduced in concordance with country’s demands.”

The text concludes that the Mexican economic model, policies and institutional context “dictate the general environment for the economy to stop growing and equally for everyone. On one hand, economic policies have not achieved economic growth with quality, meaning, with greater social and economic integration between regions, sectors and families. On the other hand social policies come together in a type of compensating mechanism of economic results, of macro policies and effects caused by the crisis. A significant factor in containing poverty can be explained by the strong trans-

ference of public income, the accelerated growth in informal work, the tax evasion an illegality that results from it.”

The document includes several strategic proposals in order to move forward finding solutions such as “the implementation of a social pact for rural growth and competitiveness, employment and productivity, equity and sustainability. (...) The ideal mechanism for formulating appropriate policies, ensuring continuity and long-term commitment to achieve effectiveness and the best results is a shared vision in which decision makers, relevant social actors and organized society share the responsibility of identifying structural restrictions that limit rural development and the ability to overcome poverty. Implementing this Pact in rural territories is highly advisable.”

The book also suggests the implementation of “an approach on territorial development for competitiveness and social cohesion in policies,” to, for example, define what ‘rural’ means under new paradigms and agree on the “levels of maximum gaps permissible in well-being indicators between territories, based on current conditions and national goals.” It also proposes reforms for each of the three levels of government in executing macro-economic, sectoral and social policies; “and to solve the lack of definition and dual responsibility in the territory between federal and local governments, which end resulting in a lack of coordination and conflict.”

Parallel to the process of creating this book, RDG Mexico, through its Executive Secretary, established a number of strategic alliances, among which it is worth highlighting the one with leaders Abelardo Ávila Curiel and Julieta Ponce from the National Forum for Building a Food and Nutritional Policy in Mexico (FONAN in Spanish). Within this framework, Mendoza Zazueta gave a presentation in June 2012 during the Forum, in which over 20 academic, research and social figures participated, with the title “Diagnostics and Proposals on Rural Poverty in Mexico.” This Forum sought to influence guidelines set forth by the National Development Plan 2013-2018 with three key proposals: Establishing a National Council, creating an observatory and implementing a national program on food and nutrition.

Furthermore, at the end of March 2012, academics from UNAM from the group known as “Mexico and the Crisis: Toward a New Development Path” outlined several public policies highlighting the need to fight poverty and promote rural development. Their proposal was presented to all decision makers in the country’s government. In their text, the authors mentioned the name of RDG Mexico’s Executive Secretary and Gustavo Gordillo –academic, former Subsecretary of Agriculture and Agrarian Reform and member of RDG Mexico— as contributors regarding food security and rural development issues.

After a new government was elected, headed by President Enrique Peña Nieto, Enrique de la Madrid, a prominent member of RDG Mexico, was named as head of a team dealing with countryside issues during the transition period. De la Madrid represented the new government when receiving the aforementioned proposal document and congratulated the Group for their work, thanking them for having been part of it. He also affirmed Peña Nieto’s commitment to making food poverty one of its priorities. De la Madrid added that the Mexican government was already analyzing the issue and that, in that regard “the work of this Group couldn’t be timelier (...). Be assured that this work will be taken into account when public policies are designed by the incoming Administration.”



RDG Mexico's main achievement was the publication of the book "Knowledge for Change in Rural Poverty and Development: Elements for Policy Building." This document is presented to members of RDG Mexico in November 2012 and later distributed to authorities at the Ministry of Agriculture (SAGARPA) and Social Development (SEDESOL), legislators in Congress connected to the rural sector and to ministers of agricultural and social development in states across the country.

After sharing its conclusions with the new government, RDG Mexico agreed to take a break until the new Administration was in place and priorities and new authorities were clearly defined. However, individual RDG members have continued to use and share the results of their previous work. Isabel Cruz, Director for the Mexican Association of Credit Unions in the Social Sector, presented the Group's proposals in the conference "Food and Nutritional Policy: Key Elements for the National Development Plan" organized by the Universidad Autónoma Metropolitana of México. Cruz shared two of the main proposals put forth by the Group. First, the rural budget must radically be modified so that escaping poverty is possible by focusing on productivity (meaning, linking economic development policies with anti-poverty policies, with an approach that focuses on investing in productive agricultural and non-agricultural activities). Second, that public policy and the budget itself needs to use a "territorial approach" that supports access to social services as rights and policies and not as gifts, contributing to a real reduction in inequalities.

Moreover, Max Correa, General Secretary for the Cardenista Farmer Center, who has been presiding over the Permanent National Agrarian Congress, used the results of work done by the Group to create the proposal given by farmer organizations to Pena Nieto and leaders of the Mexican Pact. "Rural Poverty and Agro-food Dependence in Mexico have structural origins that must be corrected in the actions taken by the State,

agreed upon with rural sector actors," said Correa during his speech before the Pact's Council in April 2013.

Finally, since March, Rimisp re-established its dialogue initiatives with authorities from SAGARPA. After a dialogue process, a working group was established with representatives from the Ministry of Revenue and Public Credit (SHCP in Spanish), SAGARPA, SEDESOL, and the Ministry of Agrarian, Territorial and Urban Development (SEDATU in Spanish). This group, coordinated by SHCP, asked IFAD to prepare a proposal on the "Strategy and Programme to Improve the Quality of Public Spending to Increase Productivity, Production and Income for Small Agricultural Producers and Farmers." This proposal was being prepared with a deadline of July 31, 2013. It is worth mentioning that this process connects to the preparatory work done by the new COSOP, demonstrating that the political dialogue carried out by RDG Mexico can open new opportunities for IFAD to do its work in middle-income countries such as Mexico.

El Salvador:

A dialogue process with strong territorial content

"The RDG focused on generating valuable information and contributing to strategic thinking connected to territorial development in El Salvador." Ileana Gómez, Executive Secretary – Rural Development Group El Salvador

The discussion and dissemination of the Development Strategy for the Marine Coast is one of the most significant example of contributions made by the Rural Dialogue Group (RDG) El Salvador. The Strategy was presented to the Group by the Technical Secretariat of the Presidency (STP) as an intervention to consider in the areas of Bajo Lempa and Bahía Jiquilisco, with the goal of benefitting 75 municipalities with 1.5 million residents. The Group has focused on analyzing both territories, and the design of a strategy to address their issues has taken a significant amount of space in the RDG's agenda.

Development Strategy for the Marine Coast in El Salvador

The Strategy defined as an objective to promote the productive transformation in these territories by connecting them to financial sources and strengthening commercial and technical skills of producers and executives in order to support the implementation of production investment initiatives. It also seeks to encourage the creation of decent job opportunities for women and men and provide comprehensive and differentiated assistances to

women in the territories, especially in the marine coastal areas.

This strategic plan includes technical assistance for enterprises to strengthen operations, quality standards and production practices. It also seeks to increase the number of people in the territories that participate in productive practices, achieve growth in production, create more decent employment opportunities and attain innovation in production.

RDG El Salvador quickly reacted after the enormous effects left by Hurricane E12 in October 2011. Therefore, the issue of climate change and politic alternatives in rural territories was another key element for analysis for the government in place at that time.

An example of this was the Group organizing the workshop/forum "Risk Management, Vulnerability Reduction and Adaptation to Climate Change in the Reconstruction and Development of the Marine Coast in El Salvador." During this workshop, the report on "Managing Floods and Adapting to Climate Change" was presented as well as proposals "National Strategy for Climate Change and National Program for Restoring Ecosystems and Rural Landscapes," by Herman Rosa, Minister of the Environment and Na-

tural Resources; "Productive Implications and Food Security in the Marine Coast," by Hugo Flores Vice Minister of Agriculture and Livestock; and, "Development Strategy for the Marine Coast," by Roberto Turcios, Advisor to the Technical Secretariat for the Presidency.

RDG El Salvador has also played a role as a coordinator in creating connections between relevant actors. An example of this was the alliance established between the Sugar Industry Association of El Salvador and the Permanent Board of Actors in Bajo Lempa as a result of the awareness campaign "Defend Life – Cultivate Sugar Cane Responsibly," sponsored by the Knowledge for Change Project and led by the RDG. This initiative was implemented to promote more sustainable sugar cane cultivation





RDG El Salvador has also played a role as coordinator by creating connections between relevant actors. An example of this was the alliance established between the Sugar Industry Association of El Salvador and the Permanent Board of Actors in Bajo Lempa, as a result of the awareness campaign “Defend Life – Cultivate Sugar Cane Responsibly.”



and by calling affected populations to speak up about the negative impact on their lives of some forms of sugar cane cultivation. “This campaign brought to light health, environmental and social problems that few dared to discuss,” said Ileana Gómez, adding that it focused on green cultivation and showing how some producers are adopting friendly cultivation practices in the country.

Finally, RDG El Salvador dedicated itself to the design and application of a proposal on methodological tools to evaluate the impact of public policies on rural territories. This methodology was applied in the territories of Los Nonualcos and Bajo Lempa to evaluate the Family Agriculture Program (PAF in Spanish), FOMILENIO II and the Restoration of Ecosystems and Landscapes Program (PREP in Spanish).

The Permanent Board of Actors in del Bajo Lempa

Found in the Bahía de Jiquilisco-Estero Jaltepeque, the Board is comprised of actors from three municipalities, government representatives, and civil society organizations. The Development Strategy for the Marine Coast in El Salvador and the formulation of proposals related to environmental governance and climatic change constituted key discussion points.

Thanks to the creation of the Board, Bajo Lempa residents had the opportunity to talk together about the challenges they face, among them: application of agrochemicals, burns, ecosystem destruction and road construction for sugar cane transportation, cultivation lands of excessive size, and the increase of diseases among the local population. Within this

context, Julio Arrollo, Executive Director of the Sugar Industry of El Salvador (AAES in Spanish), has highlighted the role played by the RDG in supporting its organization in order to *“build international competitive standard and to find agreement points to repair disagreements together with other actors in the territories where sugar cane is cultivated.”*

The Group’s actions *“built a bridge”* between Bajo Lempa actors and the Technical Secretariat for the Presidency. *“This is an interesting relationship because the Board is a territorial point of reference for implementing development policies and programs,”* added Ileana Gomez.

“The Group’s main results focus on its participation in the processes for the National Development Plan, the Rural Development Act, and the peace dialogues between the government and FARC.”



Colombia:
The right to land and peace

“We have helped many people in the public and private sector to better understand the importance of supporting the development of rural communities and to repay the historic debt that the country has with the rural poor,” Santiago Perry, Executive Secretary of Colombia’s Rural Dialogue Group (RDG).

RDG Colombia has made several relevant contributions to the construction of policies against rural poverty. Perry highlights that, because of their work, “we have helped bring closer many actors doing rural work in Colombia.” Within this context, the Group’s main results focus on its participation in the processes related to the National Development Plan, the Rural Development Act, and the peace dialogues between the government and FARC.

Weeks after its formation, the RDG met with the Sustainable Rural Development Division of the National Planning Department (DNP in Spanish) to contribute to rural and agricultural development component of the National Development Plan, which is the most important public-policy instrument used by the government of President Juan Manuel Santos. The working relationship with the DNP has been consistent over time, demonstrated by the fact that, in March 2013, the agency asked for the RDG’s support in defining its rural policy mission soon to be established.

RDG Colombia also participated in regional round tables oriented toward achieving peace and convened by the National Congress. In December 2012, the Group participates in a general panel during the Agricultural Forum held in Bogotá, at the request of the negotiating table between the government and the FARC in Havana, with the goal of gathering feedback to be used for discussions on rural and agricultural issues.

The RDG also achieved an incidence milestone by significantly contributing to the drafting of a bill on Land and Rural Development, an emblematic project in President Santos’ priority agenda. One of Santos’ main governing strategies has been focusing on land restitution to those displaced in the conflict.

Four members of the RDG were part of a team of experts convened by the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development to draft the text of the law. From this dialogue with the government, a process of discussion was relevant in partnership with OXFAM and USAID (the United States Agency for International Development) and the Monitoring Committee for the Displaced, aimed at opening a space for discussion and receiving input from civil society organizations for the bill. There are at least five ways in the draft in which the RDG had clear influence: rural development with a territorial fo-

cus; integrated projects for income generation in poor communities; the importance of public goods; social capital; and, the participatory approach.

At the same time, and as part of restructuring the Colombian Institute for Rural Development (INCODER), the Group actively participated in designing the new strategy to support rural communities that have received land, helping make this a comprehensive and medium-term strategy.

Expanding this line of work, in early 2013, the RDG decided to conduct a review of the main institutional arrangements for existing rural territorial development in Latin American countries. The goal is to contribute to the analysis on Colombia’s institutional structure for Colombia in order to approve the Land and Rural Development Law, by including RDG’s recommendations. The review has resulted in a consultancy report that analyzes the cases of certain territories in Spain, Mexico, Brazil and Ecuador. It concludes with a series of recommendations regarding the mechanisms through which the analyzed processes can be partially adapted to redesign Colombian institutions (Escobar, 2013).

RDG Colombia In The Words of Its Executive Secretary

“We have helped many people in the public and private sectors to better understand the importance of supporting the development of rural communities and of repaying the historic debt that the country has with the rural poor.”

The RDG has helped to explain that rural development “*must be built from the territories and with the people of the territories*”. In recent debates on rural issues, such as those related to the Land and Rural Development Law or those between government negotiators and the guerrilla in Havana, there are conversations about rural

development being more equitable, fairer and with a territorial approach. “*The RDG has done its part for most of the country to talk about it. We have contributed to make that happen*”.

Nohora Iregui, Director of Colombia’s Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, bears witness to this. “*This work with the RDG is making political decisions taken or to be taken by the Government to be jointly reviewed and analyzed with the private sector for implementation*.”

Other significant advocacy milestones achieved by RDG Colombia are:

- Several RDG members participate in the ‘Land and Rural Development’ forum held in Bogota, where the Group asked the government for the future Rural Development Act to pay off the historic debt to the rural poor. The Forum was organized by Semana magazine and ever since then, this important publication has counted on Santiago Perry’s permanent participation to provide news coverage on the bill.
- In May 2011, a World Bank mission that was helping prepare the new credit program for the Ministry of Agriculture in Colombia met with members of the RDG to listen to suggestions and get to know their points of view.
- The Prodepaz Network, which brings together 19 regional development and peace programs, met with the Group’s Technical Secretary for support in formulating rural development proposals. This led to mutual cooperation and resulted in the development of the “Social mobilization and citizen participation for peace” network, based on a document created by the RDG on the major changes the country needs in relation to rural issues. In this context, a proposal submitted to the High Commissioner for Peace was explicitly based on RDG’s contributions on the subject.

RDG Colombia at the Sub-national Level: High Presence in the Departments of Huila, Caribe y Boyacá

In February 2012, RDG Colombia began projecting its work at the sub-national level with the establishment of Huila’s RDG, department of the south of the country. Its first activity was a forum in the city of Neiva about regional Rural Development. From there, Huila’s RDG organizes activities with local and regional governments and manages to contribute to Huila and the city of Neiva’s Development Plans.

Shortly after, this local group organized a Rural Development Act forum where Absalón Machado and Santiago Perry, members of the Colombia’s RDG presented. The regional media covered the event saying: “*The debate on Rural Development Act is on*”.

In April of that same year, RDG Caribbean was formally established, with the participation of prominent personalities in the academic and political regional fields, as well as rural matter specialists, in a meeting hold in the city of Barranquilla. In November 2012, this Group held a meeting with the Finance Minister Mauricio Cárdenas, to share the role of the Group and its involvement in the discussions about public policy related to rural areas. The Group also contributed to strategies related to restructuring areas affected by the cold wave.

In turn, RDG Boyacá was created in September 2012, in a large Rural Development Act forum held in Tunja, the department’s capital, with 150 attendees with civil society actors, academics and public sector representatives.



Ecuador:
Improving the quality of life in rural communities

“The opportunity to show options and propose public policy actions for the rural world strengthened our capacity to offer technical and political advice.” Manuel Chiriboga, Executive Secretary – RDG Ecuador

During its first year, RDG Ecuador focused on working in the National Strategy for Rural Good Living (Buen Vivir Rural), where the Group executed a base initiative to identify 20 rural territories for public-policy priority, later incorporated by the Coordinating Ministry for Social Development (MCDS in Spanish), who prioritized 11 of those identified territories.

Other key contributions made by RDG Ecuador took place in late 2012 and consist of defining the National Seeds Plan and the most recent proposals for a development strategy to improve management and production of the banana and the rice production chain, areas in which the RDG continues to work closely with MAGAP’s office of Commercialization.

The Group became the right place for producers, the labor force, and union leaders to analyze the access to certified seeds. The issue was closely followed by public policy beneficiaries (corn and rice producers), as well as decision makers (officials from the Ministry of Agriculture) and, finally, the Ministry defined and implemented a plan based on RDG Ecuador’s proposals. This plan benefits corn and rice farmers in four provinces in the country, with access to certified seeds,

technical advice and monitoring, until 100% of the potential beneficiaries are covered at the end 2014.

Together with supporting policy-making processes, the RDG has also developed forums and meetings about the role of innovation in rural development. According to the Vice Minister of Rural Development, the RDG helped to make this issue a key factor for MAGAP, aimed at giving the productive matrix a qualitative change as well as helping define the importance of incorporating technical assistance policies for innovation. *“Because of that, in the institutional structure, we are trying to push for the creation of an Under-secretariat for Innovation in all issues,”* she emphasizes.

In this way, the Group has managed to position agriculture and rural issues in the public agenda, with RGD’s meetings hosting in several occasions high-ranking officers from the ministries of Agriculture, Social Development Coordination and Economic Policy, as well as the National Ministry of Planning and Development (SENPLADES in Spanish).

Regarding the future work of the RDG, MAGAP’s Minister Javier Ponce states *“the RDG could ease relationships between producers and exporters,”* since *“now works as a space for the analysis of policies in general and of proposals and strategies, while it could probably later act as an intermediary in specific situations.”*



The National Strategy for Rural Good Living and Education

The main result of the RDG’s first year of operation was its role in the generation of a National Strategy for Rural Good Living. For the Vice Minister of Rural Development, Silvana Vallejo, the contributions made by the Group in the fight against rural poverty in Ecuador are many, but she specially emphasizes the Group’s decision to consider education a main focus of their work. The Vice Minister praised the analysis made in conjunction with the Group that was later included in the Inter-Institutional Committee for Rural Good Living. *“I always liked that aspect,”* said Mrs. Vallejo, adding that now a joint proposal with the Ministry of Education has been launched in order to promote rural education, with a general understanding of rural dynamics, to propose a management model that can define a

variety of mechanisms to address rural education.

The Inter-Institutional Committee for Rural Good Living was formed in December 2012 in order to strengthen efforts and leverage resources to meet the demands of the rural poor. The Committee coordinates policies and strategies for sustainable rural development. It consists of the Coordinating Ministries for Social Development and Production and Employment and Competitiveness, as well as the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock, Aquaculture and Fishing (MAGAP in Spanish) and the National Ministry of Planning and Development (SENPLADES in Spanish) –both with members in the RDG, and led by the Vice Minister of Rural Development Silvana Vallejo, as the Executive Secretary.

In many times, RDG meetings have hosted high-ranking officers from the ministries of Agriculture, Social Development Coordination and Economic Policy as well from the National Ministry of Planning and Development (SENPLADES in Spanish), by providing a space for direct dialogue and valuable exchange of ideas and proposals.

Evidence of how highly regarded is the Group in the eyes of the Executive branch is that MAGAP has agreed to make a financial contribution to the completion of four new dialogue events between June and September 2013, after the Project’s closure. These events include discussions on topics such as family farming productivity in the Ecuadorian coast, sustainable cattle raising, and inclusive business programs. The Belgian NGO VECO also has participated in the dialogue about this subject. As a result, an Agriculture and Development Dialogue Forum was established, sponsored by CORPEI and Rimisp, and comprised of several of the most prominent agricultural, agro-industrial, and agro-commercial businessmen in the country. It has already held two meetings to define strategies and issues, signaling how well accepted the Project has been in Ecuador as an efficient mechanism for policy dialogue.

Rural Dialogue Groups - Incidence results

COUNTRY	PUBLIC POLICY	CHARACTERISTICS OF RDG CONTRIBUTIONS	RESULTS
México	Government Programs from Presidential Candidates	RDG organized a development process for a programmatic proposal on rural poverty and development in Mexico. The document is signed by 45 public and private figures, led by the National University Dean, and included legislators, leaders of social organizations, entrepreneurs, directors of specialized public-sector agencies, intellectuals, etc. The proposal is handed to the presidential candidates. The proposal is then given to the delegate of the Elected President in charge of the governmental transition for rural and agricultural matters (who had been a part of the team that drafted the document before the election).	<p>The document is used to prepare the guidelines for the National Development Plan regarding rural and agricultural matters.</p> <p>The proposal has been adopted by the Permanent Agrarian Congress (an entity that brings together the main farmer organizations in the country), whose Coordinator gave it to President Peña Nieto as part of its public-policy demands and plans.</p> <p>The ministries of Finance and Public Credit, Social Development, Agriculture and Agricultural and Territorial Development request technical assistance from IFAD in association with Rimisp to elaborate a strategy and quality-improvement proposal on public spending for the rural sector. Ongoing work is based extensively on the ideas of the RDG's proposal.</p>
El Salvador	Development Strategy for the Marine Coast (Bajo Lempa)	Support to strategy design due to a specific request from the government.	The strategic plan designed by the RDG is being implemented by the government
	FOMILENIO II Program	Technical contributions to the program-design process. Participation in the design of a project proposal made by Bajo Lempa actors for FOMILENIO II	A project proposal by Bajo Lempa actors was included in the first phase of FOMILENIO II
Colombia	Land and Rural Development Law	Participation from 4 RDG members in a government advisory group for bill drafting.	The bill uses five key RDG recommendations: rural development with a territorial focus, comprehensive projects for income generation in poor communities, the importance of public goods, social capital and participatory approach.
	INCODER's Rural Development Policy	INCODER leaders and officers participated in groups meetings, in which a space for dialogue and recommendations is created.	The idea —that today is part of the policy being implemented—that support to rural communities that have received land has to be comprehensive and medium-term is adopted.
Ecuador	The Strategy for Rural Good Living	Creation of a base document to identify 20 priority rural territories and strategy proposal for Rural Good Living.	Government prioritized 11 out of the 20 territories identified by RDG to implement the proposed strategy in those areas.
	National Plan for Seeds	Proposal created by RDG after conversations with professors, public servants, producers, entrepreneurs, and NGO leaders. Technical contributions to the Plan's design process.	Proposal embraced by government and became one of its key activities for short-cycle products. US\$5-million investment in the winter cycle and US\$4-million investment in the summer cycle. It is now in full execution.
	Competitive Development Plans for products based on family farmers.	Creation of linked institutional agreement mechanisms where small producers and other actors participate.	Competitive development plans for rice and corn are implemented, and they are expected to expand to other products.



RGD’s and IFAD’s work in all four countries

The RDGs have not only managed to influence public policy in their respective countries, they have also succeeded in creating spaces for dialogue between its members, the IFAD Country Programme Managers (CPM for its acronym in English) and governments national, facilitating the creation of new partnerships and projects.

In two of the four countries substantive agreements were reached: Mexico and Ecuador. In Mexico, thanks to the relationships built by the GDR, IFAD Government was authorized to prepare a new operation with the Ministry of Agriculture, which was approved and signed by the government in November 2012. Moreover, the work and the relationships built, led in 2013 to the Government through the Ministry of Finance requested IFAD technical assistance to prepare a draft strategy and development program for small farmers and peasants of the Crusade National Anti-Hunger. Finally, the work done in 2012 and 2013, provided the major inputs for the preparation of the new COSOP.

Meanwhile, in Ecuador, the RDG experience was positively regarded in the Country Program Evaluation, and therefore the RDG was consulted for the following COSOP (Country Strategic Opportunities Programme) in Ecuador. Within this context, it has been suggested to formally incorporate the RDG as part of IFAD's country strategy. In this regard, Ecuador's Minister of Agriculture expressed to IFAD the importance of the RDG in Ecuador and advocated for its continuity after this first phase of work is completed.



INTERVIEW WITH TOMÁS ROSADA:

The RDG's greatest success was achieving incidence

The Regional Economist for IFAD's Latin American and the Caribbean Division analyzes management activities for the Project "Knowledge for Change in Rural Poverty and Development" and evaluates RDG contributions in the four countries where the project was implemented.

"Geographically, there are still many people living in poverty who are not part of the global village," states Tomás Rosada, reflecting on the persistence of rural poverty in Latin America.



In the context of the work Rimisp-Latin American Center for Rural Development has been doing for the past 26 years in pursuit of promoting institutional, economic and social changes to make Latin America a more just and sustainable region, some of its major projects have been funded through contributions from the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD).

To analyze and understand their evaluation of the Project "Knowledge for Change in Rural Poverty and Development," Tomás Rosada, Regional Economist for IFAD's Latin American and the Caribbean Division, shares during this interview his perspective on the work of the Rural Dialogue Groups (RDG) and on how to tackle the fight against rural poverty in the region. Regarding the project which led to the support of the Fund, Rosada explains that to have greater incidence on transforming Latin American rural areas, IFAD has to "expand their toolbox, and it is es-

sential to build partnerships, leverage resources with other actors, and create broad consensus that then facilitate more operational decisions."

"Today we must rebuild a more micro agenda and bring political decisions closer to specific household welfare issues (...) Building local institutions, bringing the State to the local dimension with municipal governments, getting society more involved in the public administration services and the demand for quality, and reviewing labor market institutions, are the biggest priorities for countries in Latin America, which have the resources but also huge bottlenecks that prevent those resources to flow, leading inequalities," he underlines.

IFAD's Regional Economist is emphatic in stressing the importance of political dialogue as an adequate strategy to accomplish what he mentioned before and thus contributing to overcoming rural poverty and promoting development in Latin America. "Political dialogue is the essential tool to create conditions for change, to allow debating, to encourage the political class in general and decision makers in particular. It is because of political dialogue that strategic alliances can be identified between social actors to promote an agenda, and in this case, to fight against rural poverty. Without political dialogue, the sustainability and legitimacy of any agenda is compromised," he adds. In that note, the Economist states "the RDG model was interesting because it offered a new way to bring about that dialogue."

Rural Dialogue and Incidence Groups

Rosada points out that the so-called "Washington Consensus" had "shortcomings, by dismantling those institutions that served the rural sector, betting on a battalion of consultants and private suppliers, willing to get to absolutely remote geographic places, which, of course, never happened." In that sense, in most countries of the region there are still big pockets of communities located away from decision-making centers, with the subsequent poverty and inequality gaps.

The RDGs created for this Project are "an interesting model for the creation of spaces, because it brings together a variety of actors that share a genuine concern for rural development. Additionally, after a while, RDGs started to occupy a space in the dynamics of their own countries and respective territories and were seen as a useful space to evaluate ideas, governmental initiatives and work hypothesis, among other objectives. That is in itself a contribution to democratic exercise in the region."

"To have gained the ability to be heard by society and its political class, in many cases at the highest level, as well as to create the expectation of ongoing monitoring of local processes," is one of the Project's great achievements, according to Rosada.

IFAD's Regional Economist adds that another positive element in managing the four RDGs was in the "sense of opportunity they had to find a favorable situation and take advantage of it: For example, in Mexico, with the electoral event; in Colombia, with land and rural development law initiatives that Santos' administration is promoting; in Ecuador, with the support requested by the government for the National Strategy for Rural Good Living; and, in El Salvador, opening resource-management spaces for territorial development in the coastal areas."

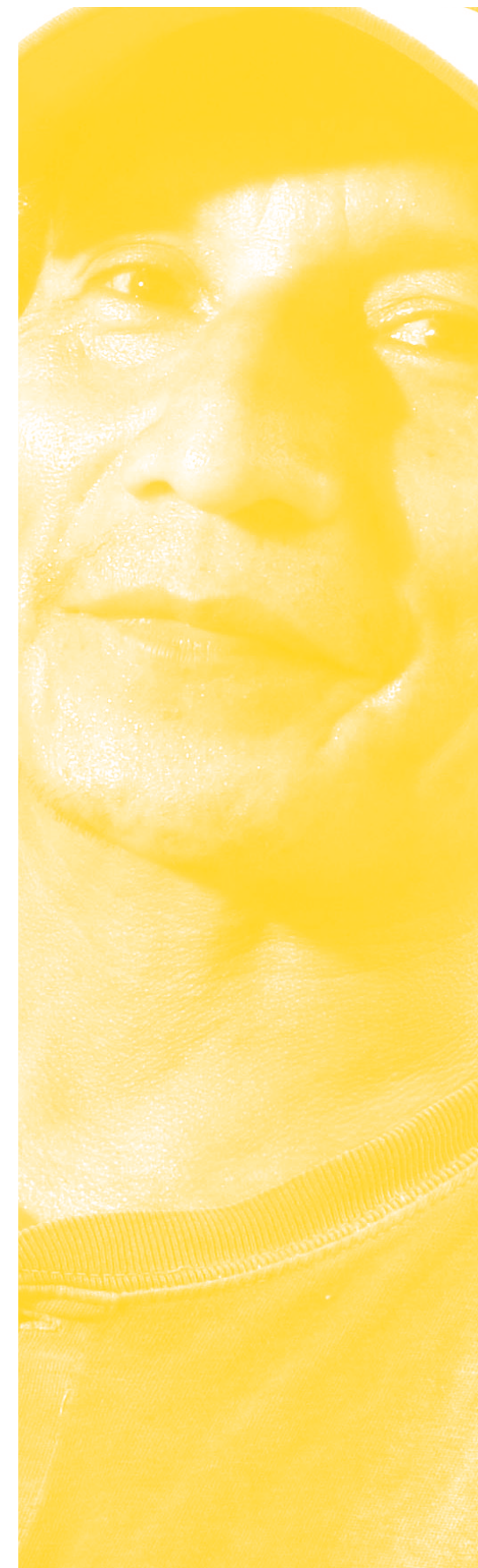
"RDGs demonstrated in a very concrete manner how to use tools for political dialogue in a creative way, recognizing the distinctive elements of each of the countries where they were implemented. We now have a new tool,

"RDGs demonstrated in a very specific way how to use tools for political dialogue in a creative way, recognizing the distinctive elements in each of the countries where they were implemented."

because RDGs can be complementary to another form of political dialogue that IFAD has supported through the Family Agriculture Network in the Southern Cone (REAF, in Spanish)," he states.

He explains it is very important for IFAD to have confirmed that there are spaces for political dialogue on rural development and, in that regard, stresses "at the country level, Rural Dialogue Groups were able to approach decision making centers and have an impact; in some cases, with presidents and ministers, and in others with members of Congress or technocratic groups."

The main contribution of RDGs "is to have shown that spaces for political dialogue about issues that often do not get public attention can also succeed," noting that these spaces have "the potential to influence changes in the agenda and not only to give visibility to or position a particular issue." In summary, according to IFAD's Regional Economist, the Groups' greatest triumph "was achieving incidence, described as success at positioning important rural development issues in a space of independent dialogue and without linkages. A second phase, we could say, would seek to transform realities," says Tomás Rosada.





Overcoming Rural Poverty

Tomás Rosada, Ph.D. in Agricultural Economics from the University of Guelph (Ontario, Canada) and an expert on issues related to poverty, inequality, social protection and microfinance, also reviews some of the points of view that influence the inequities affecting Latin America, analyzing in depth factors that could contribute to the solution finding process. In relation to that he describes that *“overcoming poverty cannot be achieved only with the traditional conceptual framework that the fight must focus on the will of those living in poverty. It also requires the transformation of structures that determine opportunities for those living in poverty. Some of those structures are, for example, isolation and lack of geographic connection, politics and institutional detachment from the decision making centers.”*

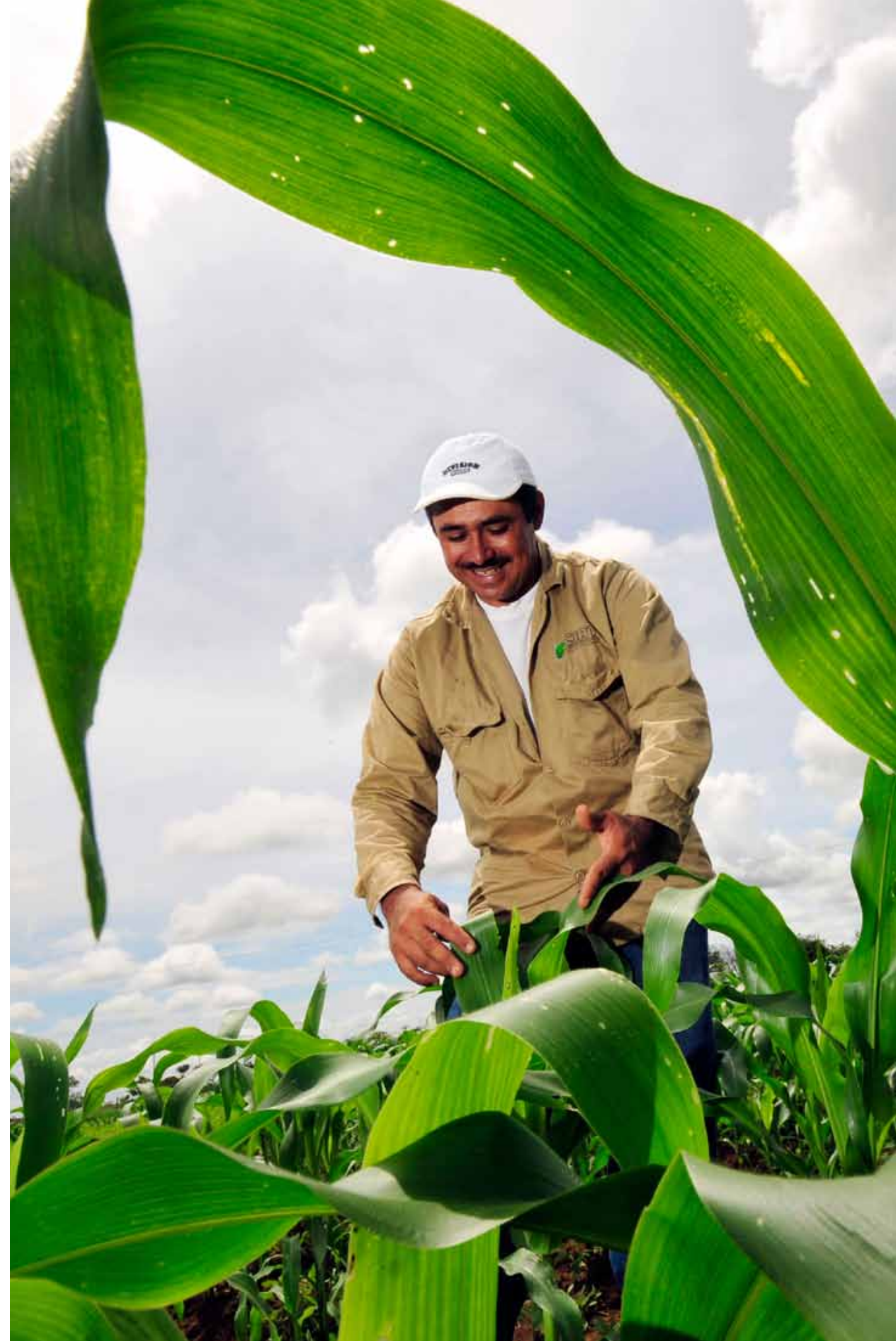
“Geographically there are still many people who live in poverty that are not part of the global village, and therefore, their demands are hardly ever heard; the State and the people have to be brought closer together,” he explains.

Rosada adds that, historically, rural poverty has been one of the hardest and most difficult to overcome, because *“it is always related to isolation from the rest of society, from decision-making centers, everything.”* Hence, connectivity is probably a road we should travel through much faster. If we all agree with that, public investment in basic infrastructure

(roads and services) and institutional enrichment in the territories are two essential conditions to connect poor rural communities both physically and politically,” he says.

In this regard, the Economist stresses the importance of the private sector in the process of fighting off inequalities, and explains that this sector *“should be involved and participate from a more political dimension as well. It is in order to change that vision of the peasant and small producer as an object of social policy only, and see him/her as a subject, an ally in the social and economic development process. We must change this imagery in the minds of those who mobilize private and public resources.”*

“I believe that is another great benefit of RDGs, because they create spaces that connect a variety of actors, including private actors, who are not the typical subjects IFAD pays attention to and that, when they communicate with each other, they build shared visions, expand their social capital networks, and mobilize the will to transform realities,” concludes Tomás Rosada





2011 Latin American report on poverty and inequality

Poverty and extreme inequality concentrate in rural territories in Latin America

“The most lagging areas of the countries are grouped together. There are two major types of territorially concentrated problems: Urban areas are affected, mainly, by problems of income inequity and insecurity, while rural areas fall behind in access to basic services and rights, like health and education.”

Inequality is a key issue in Latin American countries and it is present more frequently in the region's public agenda. Day after day, there are more and more academics, researchers, and decision makers worried about the inequality problem, which not only persists over time but also continues to grow. On one hand, the gap between the rich and the poor within countries continues to grow and, on the other, the distance between rich and poor countries is expanding.

Paying close attention to this issue, the 2011 Latin American Report on Poverty and Inequality 2011, released in 2012 and a research effort coordinated by Rimisp-Latin American Center for Rural Development, addresses six economic and social dimensions that determine territorial inequalities in the region and then analyzes the public-policy implications of these inequalities and their relationship to institutional capacities.

The report seeks to encourage discussion of key issues affecting those territories that have greater difficulty in achieving growth while reducing poverty and inequality.

The goal was not only to define how much the situation grows or worsens in an average country, but also how those results are distributed in the territories. The first part of the report presents data on territorial inequalities on education, health, economic dynamism and employment, income and poverty, social security and gender. The second part analyzes the role played by sectoral policies in maintaining territorial inequality, and the role and capabilities present in the territories themselves.

The report aims to become an ongoing Rimisp publication with permanently updated information on the evolution of territorial inequalities and their impact on poverty and inequality situations, also incorporating in each issue a specific topic of in-depth analysis. The next issue of the publication will come out in late 2013 and will focus on the unequal distribution of opportunities to access quality employment.

The 2011 Latin American Report found that there were large inequity gaps between territories. In general, and independently of average country results, each of the dimensions shows that in all cases there are sub-national territories with significant lags. These territories share some common characteristics:

- They are smaller in terms of population
- They are more rural
- They tend to have a greater percentage of indigenous or Afro-descendant communities
- They tend to be further away from national capitals and/or big cities, with many lagging sub-national territories located in border towns

The exception to this trend occurs in public safety and inequality, dimensions for which the most lagging of territories are precisely the most densely populated and urban.



The Report also shows that in many occasions public policies not only do not solve territorial inequalities, but increase or maintain them. This is how the experiences analyzed experiences show on graphs:

Education Policy in Chile

- The problems that affect Chile's education policy lie in its design and application, without a territorial management model and without the participation of the responsible actors for managing education.
- Homogeneously treating a clearly heterogeneous reality is a key weakness in Chile's education policy, which should consider the particularity of the territories, and from there begin the "reconstruction" of a national policy.

Rural Development Programs in Mexico

- Despite a series of reforms that have significantly increased the amount of investment in rural areas, to the point that overall allocation of public expenditure directed to the rural sector increased by 240% in the last decade, extreme territorial inequalities still prevail.
- While it is not possible to infer that these results are a direct cause of agricultural support programs analyzed for this report, the way public resources have been allocated has not reversed rural poverty.

Lastly, the Report considers two important factors for territorial development:

Management Capacity of Local Governments.

In this regard, the report shows that:

- The majority of residents in the countries analyzed live in territories where the local government has a management capacity close to the national average; however, such management capacity in many cases is low.
- The largest gaps appear in the local government's capacity for income and investment generation; significant differences are seen between cities that have their own resources to manage their development processes and others that have no investment resources at all.

Social Capacities to Overcome Poverty.

The Report reveals two successful experiences where territorial actors got involved in managing their development with outstanding results.

- Sierra Sur Project, Peru: Breaking the Poverty and Inequality Trend. The project stood out for: (i) involving the public, self-monitoring, and the evaluation of public-fund allocation, (ii) being an active space for dialogue, debate and exchange among alternative projects, where everyone can share their point of view and present evidence in favor of their initiative.
- Southern Province of Santander, Colombia: ¡A Territory with Solidarity! An experience involving a network of labor, housing, production and credit union cooperatives with thousands of members, which achieved: (i) community development that has led to the presence of numerous social organizations, (ii) creation of new institutions, (iii) formation of new social relations, (iv) improvement in the living conditions of the population.



Report launch and dissemination

In order to contribute to the public-policy dialogue against poverty and inequality in Latin America, the 2011 Latin American Report was presented at several public events and academic seminars. In four countries the Project “*Knowledge for Change in Rural Poverty and Development*” was implemented as well as in Chile, where Rimisp’s headquarters are located, and Guatemala, taking advantage of the opening of IFAD’s Central America office.

Launch in Mexico

The Report was officially launched in Mexico on April 24, 2012. In a public presentation at the Universidad Autónoma de Mexico (UNAM), Julio Berdegué, Project Coordinator, outlined the content of the Report together with Leonardo Lomelí, Director of the Economics Department at UNAM, and Rolando Cordera, Professor Emeritus at UNAM and Coordinator of the university’s Seminar on Social Issues (SUCS in Spanish) –both RDG members—who made comments and shared their perspectives on the Report.

Josefina Stubbs, IFAD’s Director of the Latin America and the Caribbean Division, and Tomás Rosada, Regional Economist of the Latin America and the Caribbean Division at the same institution, also spoke about the Report. Stubbs said

the Report has great significance because it “*helps us see the inequality issue in a bigger dimension. It helps us give Latin American averages a name, last name, color, gender, and territorial space not only in terms of income but also on capabilities, opportunities, and social and local dynamics. This is key for IFAD, since our work is done in the poorest rural areas,*” she stated.

To the public presentation also attended several members of RDG Mexico, UNAM academics and students, and experts and people interested in rural matters.

As part of the launch, the Mexican College (Colmex in Spanish) organized a conference on “Poverty and Rural Inequality in Latin America and Mexico,” with the participation of Julio Berdegué, Antonio Yúnez-Naude, Director of the Center for Economic Studies at Colmex, Tomás Rosada, Rodolfo de la Torre, Coordinator of the Office of Research in Human Development in Mexico for UNDP; John Scott, Researcher for the Center for Economic Research and Teaching (CIDE in Spanish) and author of the section in the Report on Rural Development Policy in Mexico; Alicia Puyana, Professor and Researcher at the Latin American School of Social Sciences (FLACSO); Isidro Soloaga, Researcher



at the Center for Economic Research of Colmex; Luis Jaime Sobrino, from Coleman, and José Antonio Mendoza, Executive Secretary of RDG Mexico.

Launch in Chile

In Chile, the Report was released in May 2012 at the Extension Center of the Universidad Católica, with a presentation from Rimisp's Executive Director, Claudia Serrano, comments by Francisco Javier Diaz, Senior Researcher at CIEPLAN, and Raúl González, Professor at the Universidad Academia Humanismo Cristiano, Chile.

Later on, the conference on *"Territorial Poverty and Inequality in Latin America: The case of Chile"* took place, at the same location, with presentations by Ignacia Fernández and Jorge Rodríguez, Coordinators of the publication. Also commenting on the report were Heinrich Von Baer, President of the National Council for Regionalization and Decentralization in Chile (CONAREDE); Claudia Sanhueza, Professor and Researcher at the Public Policy Institute of the Universidad Diego Portales; Pablo González, Coordinator of the Human Development Report in Chile, PNUD; Egon Montesinos, Vice President for Research and Graduate Studies at the University of Lagos; Gonzalo Valdivieso, Director at the Center for Education, Intercultural and Local Development at the Universidad Católica del Norte and Director of the Regional Observatory of Human Development.

Launch in Guatemala

Julio Berdegúé presented the Report in May 2012 at the opening ceremony of IFAD's office in Central America. The presentation emphasized the enormous inequality gaps recorded in rural areas of Latin America. At that time, Tomás Rosada said that *"the geographical inequalities we see in several countries such as Guatemala are deep"* and that *"in Latin America, rural areas fall behind in access to basic rights and services, such as health and education, and in indicators that reflect the strong inequalities in power relations between men and women."*

Launch in Ecuador

The launch took place during the *"Meeting 2012: Territories in Motion,"* organized by Rimisp's Rural Territorial Dynamics program (DTR) in June 2012. With talks from Claudia Serrano and Julio Berdegúé from Rimisp, and the presentation of results from the first part of the Report by Jorge Rodríguez, researchers from national and foreign universities exchanged information and knowledge about the data revealed.

At that time, the then Coordinating Minister for Social Development, Jeanette Sánchez, placed the participation of social actors as key for territorial development, assessing the particularities of each territory. Ecuador's National Minister of Planning and Development, Fundar Falcón, stated that in order to overcome territorial gaps is necessary to assume costs that are at the same time challenges to good living.

Launch in El Salvador

Jorge Rodríguez, one of its coordinators, who pointed out that *"the averages of statistical measurements hide the reality of lagging territories"*, presented the Report on July 5, 2012. Comments were made by Dr William Pleitez, Coordinator of UNDP in El Salvador, who noted that in that country *"sectoral policies continue to be extremely weak and that should force decision makers to review where resources can come from to channel them into local development."*

For Ileana Gómez, Executive Secretary of RDG El Salvador, the Report *"was an active document that provided input for the design of public programs and policies. That was its goal."*

After the Report's launch, the attention of the authorities and the media turned to relevant findings related to characteristics faced by lagging territories in El Salvador. The content was a revelation to Salvadorian society because it introduced the disadvantages of border and remote territories, located far from large urban areas, into the national agenda. After the Report's presentation, *"the government, strategically, decided to name Morazán its second territory of progress, one of the border departments in vulnerable conditions featured in the research,"* indicated Ileana Gómez. *"The 2011 Poverty and Inequality Report can generate inputs to promote inclusive policies with a territorial approach. Information that can be considered for future studies:*

environment, migration, and undernourishment, among others," said Jose Alejandro Alvarez, a Researcher with the Universidad Centroamericana José Simeón Cañas (UCA).

Launch in Colombia

The launch of the Report was an opportunity to present to the public the recently created RDG Caribbean. The event took place on August 23, 2013 in the city of Cartagena in conjunction with the Colombian Caribbean Observatory and with the participation of Claudia Serrano, Rimisp's Executive Director, and Antonio Hernández Gamarra, member of RDG Caribbean. Among the attendees, there were professors from renowned universities in the region and economic and social researchers and students who held the document in good regard.

During the same event, Antonio Hernández presented the results of his work *"Reconstruction Priorities in the Caribbean,"* which served as the basis for the proposals of the RDG, indicating that severe poverty conditions in this region contrast with the social and economic importance it has: the Caribbean region constitutes 11.6% of the country's land area, accounts for 21.4% of the total Colombian population, and produces 14% of the national GDP. According to the expert, the Colombian Caribbean region urgently needs four reforms: to improve human capital, more and better economic growth, new institutions, and increased public and private investment.





TOOLS FOR IMPLEMENTING A DIALOGUE STRATEGY:

Policy analysis, communications and evaluation

Publications and working papers

During its three years of existence, the Project has made a permanent contribution with the creation of technical inputs for the policy-dialogue process. These inputs are materialized in a set of diagnostic studies, analyses and policy proposals produced by RDG members and other consultants specifically invited with these goals in mind. Among these documents, the ones produced during the first year of work stand out for their goal to build a common conceptual framework in order to interpret the causes of poverty and inequality in the region. Beyond these documents, the RGDs also carried out works of analysis specific to the priorities outlined in their agendas.

Andrade, Miguel (2011). **“La institucionalidad para el desarrollo rural territorial en el Ecuador”**. Project Knowledge for Change in Rural Poverty and Development. Rimisp: Santiago, Chile.

Betancor, Andrea and Félix Modrego (2011). **“Estrategias de sustento de los hogares rurales y su evolución análisis de cuatro países latinoamericanos”**. Working Paper # 5. Project Knowledge for Change in Rural Poverty and Development. Rimisp: Santiago, Chile.

Cabrera, Oscar and Pablo Amaya (2012). **“Vulnerabilidad Socioeconómica ante el Cambio Climático en El Salvador”**. Project Knowledge for Change in Rural Poverty and Development. Rimisp: Santiago, Chile.

Castillo Vélez, María José (2013). **“Productividad del Sector Agropecuario Ecuatoriano con Énfasis en Banano, Cacao, Arroz y Maíz Duro”**. Rimisp: Ecuador.

Cummins, Andrew and Ileana Gómez (Coords.) (2013). **“Diseño de Instrumentos Metodológicos para la Evaluación y Sistematización de Políticas Públicas y su Incidencia en los Territorios Rurales”**. Project Knowledge for Change in Rural Poverty and Development. RDG El Salvador.

Chiriboga, Manuel and Brian Wallis (2010). **“Diagnóstico de pobreza rural en Ecuador y respuestas de política pública”**. Project Knowledge for Change in Rural Poverty and Development. Rimisp: Santiago, Chile.

Dirven, Martin (2011). **“El empleo rural no agrícola y la disminución de la pobreza rural ¿Qué sabemos en América Latina en 2010?”**. Working Paper #2. Project Knowledge for Change in Rural Poverty and Development. Rimisp: Santiago, Chile.

Echeverría, Julio (2011), **“Evaluación contexto país para la puesta en marcha de Grupo de Trabajo sobre pobreza rural y desarrollo”**. Project Knowledge for Change in Rural Poverty and Development. Rimisp: Santiago, Chile.



Escobar, Germán (2013). **“Una revisión de los principales arreglos institucionales para el Desarrollo Territorial Rural”**. Project Knowledge for Change in Rural Poverty and Development. Rimisp: Santiago, Chile.

Fernández, Ignacia, Julio Berdegúe & Tomás Rosada (2011). **Informe Regional: apoyando la puesta en marcha de la Estrategia del FIDA ‘Diálogo de políticas para el desarrollo rural’**. IFAD: Rome.

RDG Colombia (2012). **“Estrategias para mitigar la pobreza en el campo: los casos de Sudáfrica y Brasil”**. Project Knowledge for Change in Rural Poverty and Development. Rimisp: Santiago, Chile, and Corporación PBA: Bogotá, Colombia.

RDG Mexico (2012). **“Conocimiento y Cambio en Pobreza Rural y Desarrollo. Elementos para la construcción de una política”**. Project Knowledge for Change in Rural Poverty and Development. Mexico, D.F.

González, José Luis (2012). **“Estudio de las condiciones que determinan la práctica de la no quema en explotaciones de la Caña de Azúcar en El Salvador”**. Project Knowledge for Change in Rural Poverty and Development. Rimisp: Santiago, Chile.

Hernández, Antonio (2012). **“Prioridades de la política de reconstrucción en la Región Caribe colombiana”**. Project Knowledge for Change in Rural Poverty and Development. Rimisp: Santiago, Chile.

Hollenstein, Patric y Carrión, Diego (2011). **“Las prioridades de política pública para la reducción de la pobreza rural en Ecuador”**. Project Knowledge for Change in Rural Poverty and Development. Rimisp: Santiago, Chile.

Jorquera, Daniela (2011). **“Gobernanza para el desarrollo local”**. Working Paper #6. Project Knowledge for Change in Rural Poverty and Development. Rimisp: Santiago, Chile.

Maletta, H. (2011). **“Tendencias y perspectivas de la agricultura familiar en América Latina”**. Working Paper #1. Project Knowledge for Change in Rural Poverty and Development. Rimisp: Santiago, Chile.

Mendoza, José Antonio (2010). **“Pobreza Rural en México: algunos elementos de debate”**. Project Knowledge for Change in Rural Poverty and Development. Rimisp: Santiago, Chile.

Perry, Santiago (2010). “Documento de Diagnóstico: La pobreza rural en Colombia”. Project Knowledge for Change in Rural Poverty and Development. Rimisp: Santiago, Chile.

Perry, Santiago (2011). **“Consulta nacional sobre prioridades en pobreza rural en Colombia”**. Project Knowledge for Change in Rural Poverty and Development. Rimisp: Santiago, Chile.

Rangel, Marta (2011). **“Pobreza rural y los programas de transferencia condicionadas en América Latina y el Caribe”**. Working Paper #3. Project Knowledge for Change in Rural Poverty and Development. Rimisp: Santiago, Chile.

Rodríguez, Eduardo (2012). **“Documento de diagnóstico del Bajo Lempa y Estero de Jaltepeque”**. Project Knowledge and Change in Rural Poverty and Development. Rimisp: Santiago, Chile.

RDG Ecuador – Executive Secretary (2011) **“Territorios para el Buen Vivir Rural”**. Project Knowledge for Change in Rural Poverty and Development. Rimisp: Santiago, Chile.

Stefoni, Carolina (2011). **“Migración, remesas y desarrollo estado del arte de la discusión y perspectivas”**. Working Paper #4. Project Knowledge for Change in Rural Poverty and Development. Rimisp: Santiago, Chile.



Communications for policy dialogue

In order to support the policy-dialogue objective of the Project Knowledge for Change in Rural Poverty and Development and the work of the Rural Dialogue Groups in Mexico, El Salvador, Colombia and Ecuador, a communications strategy was established with the objective of positioning rural development issues at various outlets and using specific messaging for a variety of stakeholders.

The working model to respond to communicational objectives was the creation of a communications team connected to the general Project and that had the support of a journalist in each of the four countries outlined.

Over 79,000
Visitors to the Project’s Website: Knowledge for Change
Between September 2010 (when it was first launched) and May 31, 2013, the website www.rimisp.org/cambiopobrezarural had a total of 79,193 general visitors and 58,625 unique visitors.

The average monthly visitor count was around 3,000. June 2011 saw the highest number of visitors with 6,000 of them.

The most-visited pages were the Homepage (18,600 visitors), RDG Mexico’s Homepage (3,698 visitors); RDG

Colombia’s Homepage (3,111 visitors); RDG Ecuador’s Homepage (2,531 visitors) and the News (2,049 visitors).

Most visitors arrived to the site through a browser (64%). Around 16% made its way to the site through referral traffic, and 20% came directly by using the URL.

Over 8,000
Visits to the Latin American Report Website
Between April 15 2012 (date in which it was launched) and May 2013, 6,084 unique visitors came to the webpage for the Latin American Report on Poverty and Inequality. These visitors had a total of 8,084 visits.

Data downloads included approximately 1,300 visits/downloads. The entire Report and its Chapters were downloaded 890 times, while maps were downloaded 580 times and working papers, 390 times.

The digital graphics section had about 500 visits.

Communications materials were a central aspect of the work done within the context of the Project Knowledge for Change in Rural Poverty and Development, seeking to position poverty and inequality issues and the dialogue strategies development in each of the countries of implementation.

100
Newsletters on Knowledge for Change
As part of the communications strategy 98 newsletters were published for the four RDGs: 24 in Mexico, 25 in El Salvador, 25 in Colombia and 24 in Ecuador.

There were also three bi-annual newsletters, adapted for each of the four countries, which focused on opinion leaders and policy decision-makers with global information regarding the program at the Latin American level and highlighting experiences in the various RDGs.

209
Appearances in the Press
The press work carried out by the Project Knowledge for Change in Rural Poverty and Development generated 157 appearances in press outlets between 2010 and 2013. If we add to this number the 52 articles related to the 2011 Latin American Report on Poverty and Inequality, the total number is 209.

Articles and interviews related to the Project appeared on written media and TV and radio programs in the following countries: Mexico, Guatemala, El Salvador, the Dominican Republic, Costa Rica, Venezuela, Colombia, Ecuador, Argentina, Chile, United Kingdom and other media outlets with regional coverage.

Media presence: Highlights

The Guardian (United Kingdom)
Latin America’s poverty data masks great inequalities, report says
April 2012

El Universal (Mexico)
Pobreza y desigualdad en el campo de AL
(Poverty and Inequality in America Latina’s Countryside)
April 2012

Telesur TV
Pobreza extrema de México concentrada mayormente en el campo
(Extreme Poverty in Mexico Concentrates Mostly in the Countryside)
April 2012

Prensa Libre (Guatemala)
Gigantescas brechas
(Gigantic Gaps)
May 2012

CNN Chile
Experta explicó la desigualdad territorial de Latinoamérica
(Expert Explains Territorial Inequality in Latin America)
May 2012

La Segunda (Chile)
Estudio sobre pobreza y desigualdad revela “enormes inequidades” entre las comunas del país
(Study on Poverty and Inequality Reveals “Huge Inequities” in the Country’s Comunas)
May 2012

Diario Digital (Dominican Republic):
Desigualdad territorial se hace visible en América Latina
(Territorial Inequality Becomes Visible in Latin America)
May 2012

El País (Costa Rica)
Desigualdad territorial se hace visible en América Latina
(Territorial Inequality Becomes Visible in Latin America)
Mayo 2012

El Mercurio de Cuenca (Ecuador)
Zonas rurales son las menos atendidas que las urbanas
(Rural Areas Receive Less Attention than Urban Areas)
June 2012



Magazine Summa (Regional)
Municipios fronterizos son los más pobres de El Salvador
(Border Municipalities are the Poorest in El Salvador)
July 2012

Newspaper El Mundo (El Salvador)
Los municipios fronterizos son los más pobres
(Border Municipalities are the Poorest in El Salvador)
July 2012

El nuevo empresario (Ecuador)
Desarrollo social lidera reunión sobre pobreza rural
(Social Development Leads Gathering on Rural Poverty)
December 2010

Oncenoticias (Mexico)
Presentación proyecto Conocimiento y Cambio en México
(Presentation of the Project Knowledge for Change in Mexico)
February 2011

La Jornada (Mexico)
Impulsará la UNAM proyecto contra la pobreza rural, anuncia José Narro
(UNAM Will Promote Project against Rural Poverty, Says Jose Narro)
October 2011

Radio Visión (Ecuador)
Entrevista a Manuel Chiriboga
(Interview with Manuel Chiriboga)
May 2012

Canal Cnplus (Ecuador)
Entrevista a Santiago Perry, secretario técnico GDR Colombia
(Interview with Santiago Perry, Executive Secretary for RDG Colombia)
June 2012

El Heraldo (Colombia)
El desarrollo agropecuario y la paz
(Agricultural Development and Peace)
January 2013

El Universo (Ecuador)
¿Buenas recomendaciones bananeras?
(Good Recommendation for Banana Producers?)
May 2013

Monitoring and Evaluation

The Project’s strategy for Monitoring and Evaluation was always focused on contributing to understanding the policy-dialogue process as a mechanism to influence decision-making at the public-policy level in order to overcome rural poverty. The strategy also sought to become an early-alert mechanism for challenges and difficulties that could arise and to allow for making decisions aimed at rectify courses of action.

It was decided to establish three moments to carry out evaluation activities:

- The initial period, in which early conditions for dialogue were assessed, examining existing conditions for this process in each of the four countries and the priority given to poverty and rural development issues.
- A mid-term evaluation of the process to establish and implement Rural Dialogue Groups, examining how the groups were created, their representatives, its working agenda

and the role played by the central coordinating team. This evaluation was conducted from July to September, 2011. Based on the recommendations given, the Project’s coordinating team took some operational decisions and results allowed for a discussion on the dialogue process and its characteristics, as well as its contribution to policy change. The work continued with a workshop in Rome on October 4th and 5th, 2011 and it continues to be carried out internally by IFAD.

- A mid-term evaluation was conducted between July and November, 2012 with the goal of systematizing and analyzing mid-term processes and outcomes at each RDG. These processes and outcomes were aimed at influencing public policies targeting rural poverty and development in rural areas.

The outcomes from the Monitoring and Evaluation system are as follows:

- Asesorías para el Desarrollo (2011). “Evaluación del proceso de instalación y puesta en marcha de Grupos de Diálogo Rural”. Project Knowledge for Change in Rural Poverty and Development. Rimisp: Santiago, Chile.
- Asesorías para el Desarrollo (2012). “Evaluación intermedia Proyecto Conocimientos para el Cambio: resultados y avances de incidencia. Project Knowledge for Change in Rural Poverty and Development. Rimisp: Santiago, Chile.
- Luna, Fausto (2011). “El Salvador: Evaluación contexto país para la puesta en marcha de grupos de trabajo sobre pobreza rural y desarrollo”. Project Knowledge for Change in Rural Poverty and Development. Rimisp: Santiago, Chile.
- Mendoza, José Antonio (2010). “México: Evaluación contexto país para la puesta en marcha de Grupos de Trabajo”. Project Knowledge for Change in Rural Poverty and Development. Rimisp: Santiago, Chile.
- Molina, Juan Patricio (2011). “Evaluación del contexto colombiano para la puesta en marcha de Grupos de Trabajo sobre Pobreza Rural y Desarrollo”. Project Knowledge for Change in Rural Poverty and Development. Rimisp: Santiago, Chile.
- Unidad de Coordinación del Proyecto (The Project’s Coordinating Unit) (2010). “Plan de Seguimiento y Evaluación. Conocimiento y Cambio en Pobreza Rural y Desarrollo”. Project Knowledge for Change in Rural Poverty and Development. Rimisp: Santiago, Chile.

“Making it possible to have a policy dialogue in favor of the rural poor in Latin America and the Caribbean,”

The workshop took place on October 4th and 5th, 2011 in the IFAD offices in Rome. Participants included people directly related to the Project’s implementation -representatives from RDG Mexico (a Senator and a Representative, the Director of Rural Development at SAGARPA, and the Group’s Executive Secretary) and from Colombia (a businessman and the Group’s Executive Secretary), Rimisp’s Executive Director and the Project’s coordinators—as well as representatives from other projects supported by IFAD who are also considering policy-dialogue mechanisms: the Secretary of Family Agriculture in Brazil, the Director or the Sierra Sur Project in Peru, and the Minister of Agriculture from Ecuador.

The main workshop was held on Wednesday, October 5th, opened to all of IFAD’s offices and divisions. This event was organized in three panels, with three presentations in each of them, in order to jointly analyze several alternatives and mechanisms for policy dialogue, its sustainability and perspectives.

As a result of the workshop, the first Occasional Paper was published by IFAD’s LAC Division (Fernández, Berdegué and Rosada, 2011)

Project team

Project Coordinating Unit



**Julio A. Berdegué,
Program Coordinator**

Julio has a Ph.D. in Social Sciences from the University of Wageningen, Netherlands, a Master of Science (in Agronomy) from the University of California, Davis, USA, and a Bachelor of Science in Agricultural Engineering from the University of Arizona, USA. He is the Coordinator for the Rural Territorial Dynamics Program at Rimisp. He has participated in projects related to the access of small rural producers to dynamic markets, structural trends in food markets, rural economic organizations and rural non-agricultural employment. He was part of the team that prepared the World Bank's World Development Report 2008 on "Agriculture for Development." He is also a Consultant for international organizations such as the World Bank, the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), the Inter-American Development Bank (IADB), FAO, research centers and higher-education institutions in the U.S. and Europe, Latin American governments and farmer organizations, among others. Furthermore, Julio is the President of the Board at the Consortium for Sustainable Development in the Andean Eco-Region (CONDESAN in Spanish). He was also the Council's President at the International Center for the Improvement of Corn and Wheat (CIMMYT in Spanish) and a member of the Editorial Advising Committee at Agricultural Economics magazine.



**María Ignacia Fernández,
Assistant Coordinator**

Ignacia is Sociologist with a Ph.D. in Sociology from the University of Barcelona, Spain, and has a master's degree in Political Science from the University of Chile. She works as a Researcher at Rimisp. Thorough out her professional career, Ignacia has specialized in public-policy issues, social policy, decentralization and citizenship, both from the conceptual development level and as it relates to design, implementation and public administration. She worked at the Sub-secretary of Regional Development in Chile's Internal Affairs Ministry, first as head of the Strategic Action Unit and then as the Chief of the Policy and Studies Division. Ignacia also works as a Professor at the post-graduate level in the University of Chile and in the Sociology major at the University Diego Portales.



**Daniela Miranda,
Assistant Coordinator**

Daniela has a Sociology degree from the Pontificia Universidad Católica of Chile, and has also studied Sociology at the Universidade do Porto, in Portugal. She has worked in Pro-Urbana at the PUC as a collaborator in the Project "Sustainability in Collective Spaces in Vulnerable Neighborhoods, Guidelines for a Policy on Public Spaces, Directives on Management, Design and Maintenance" and as Assistant Consultant at the Center for the Study of Policies and Practices in Education (CEPPE in Spanish) in the Project "Executive Leadership and Quality of Education in Chile." In Rimisp, she worked as Research Assistant in the Project "Knowledge for Change in Rural Poverty and Development," "Territorial Inequality and Conditional Income Transfers: The Case of Ethical Family Income," a project to create a proposal on influence at the regional level, and the Coalitions, Territorial Dynamics and Development Project.

Communications



**Mónica Maureira,
Coordinator (until September 2012)**

Mónica is Journalist with a post-graduate degree in Human Rights and Democratization from the Human Rights Center, Law School at the University of Chile, and a Master of Arts candidate in Political Communications from the Institute of Communications and Image from the same institution. She worked as a Communications Officer at Oxfam, Great Britain, in Chile, and at Human Corporation, a research and policy action feminist center that promotes women's human rights and gender justice in Chile and Latin America. She has more than 10 years of experience in developing policy and communications strategies, which allowed her to coordinate and implement various public-interest campaigns and to develop incidence strategies targeting the media in order to position brands and themes in the political and media agenda.



**Diego Reinoso,
Communications Assistant and
Communications Coordinator
(beginning on October 2012)**

Diego is Journalist and has a degree in Social Communication from the Universidad de Santiago de Chile. His graduate thesis delved into the influence of blogs on the Chilean society and was titled "Uses and Meanings of Blog Usage in Chile." Beginning in 2007, he had an internship at the La Cuarta newspaper in Chile and worked in the Press Department a Radio Universidad in Santiago. Before becoming Communications Assistant for Rimisp's Rural Territorial Dynamics (RTD) Program, Diego supported La Cuarta's digital initiatives as a Journalist, offering web support and editing images, audios and videos. In September 2008, he assumed the position of Communications Assistant for the RTD Program at Rimisp and is the current Communications Coordinator for the Territorial Cohesion for Development Program.



Mexico Team



José Antonio Mendoza Zazueta, Executive Secretary – RDG Mexico
José Antonio is a Civil Engineer with a degree from the Universidad Autónoma de Sinaloa and a master’s degree in Operational Research from the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México. He has worked in development and public-policy instrumentation for rural development, agro-business promotion, development and instrumentation of rural micro-finances, promotion of social capital development, participative planning and Alliance development in production chains, among other areas. José Antonio held the post of Director of the Shared Irrigation Trust (FIRCO in Spanish) during President Vicent Fox’s administration, and was the Delegate for the Ministry of Agriculture and Hydraulics (SARH in Spanish) in Sinaloa during President Salinas de Gortari’s administration. As the Executive Secretary for RDG Mexico, José Antonio provides coordination support and advice for the creation of an agenda y the technical know-how necessary for decision making.



Lourdes Rudiño, Communications Manager
Lourdes has a Journalism degree from the School of Journalism Carlos Sep-tién García in Mexico City and has worked for over 20 years in rural, agricultural and food issues. Currently, she is part of the committee and editorial advising board for La Jornada del Campo, a monthly publication of La Jornada newspaper. She works as in the Project as head of the communications work in Mexico, establishing contacts between the national press and the RDG in order to ensure the information, vision and objectives of the Project generate public interest.

El Salvador Team



Ileana Gómez, Executive Secretary RDG El Salvador
Ileana is a Sociologist with a degree from the University of Central America José Simeón Cañas, UCA, and with a master’s degree in Social Sciences from FLACSO Mexico. She also has a Ph.D. in Sociology from the University of Alicante, and has worked in research related to human rights, social participation, social movements, urban sociology, environmental conflict, the environment and rural territorial management. Ileana has also worked at the Ministry of the Environment in El Salvador y as a Professor in pre-graduate and master-level courses at the University of El Salvador and UCA. She works for the PRISMA Foundation since 1999 as Senior Researcher, as member of the management team and was the Pro Tempore Coordinator in 2010-2011. Ileana has published several articles and papers on environmental conflict management, rural territorial management, local governance, rural livelihoods, and tourism and territorial development.



Nelson Cuéllar, Executive Secretary RDG El Salvador (until January 2012)
Salvadorian Economist and Researcher at the PRISMA Foundation since 1993 when it was first founded. Currently, he is a Principal Researcher and member of the management team at this institution. Between 199 and 2006, Nelson was the Sub-Director of the Foundation. His work in El Salvador and Central America includes topics such as territorial dynamics, rural livelihoods, compensation for eco-systemic services, territorial management, climate change and integrated management of water resources. Before 1993, he was a Researcher for the Regional Program for Research on El Salvador (PREIS in Spanish) and at the Confederation for Cooperative Associations of El Salvador (COACES in Spanish). Nelson was also an Economics Professor the University of El Salvador. For this Project, Nelson worked as the Executive Secretary of the RDG in El Salvador.



Susana Barrera, Communications Manager
Susana has a degree in Journalism for the University of El Salvador and a post-graduate degree in rural tourism. Currently she is the President of the Rural Tourism Association in El Salvador. Susana has worked as a Consultant and Advisor on communications for various institutions. She has also worked as a Journalist in a variety of press agencies. Se ha desempeñado como consultora y asesora en el área de comunicaciones en diversas instituciones. In her current post with the Project Knowledge for Change in El Salvador she acts as the point person for communications, supporting the RDG with its communications strategy, informing and positioning its vision and objectives with outside audiences.

Colombia Team



Santiago Perry, Executive Secretary – RDG Colombia
Santiago has a degree in Industrial Engineering and Economy from the University of the Andes (Colombia). He has worked in several governmental and private-sector institutions, as well as a Consultant in various public-policy initiatives in the rural sector, agricultural development and agricultural economy. In the public sector, he has held the post of Vice Minister of Agriculture, General Manager at the Colombian Agriculture Institute (ICA i Spanish) and as Consultant for the Ministries of Agriculture and Foreign Commerce and at the National Planning Department. In the private sector he has been the General Manager for the National Coffee Company, the Colombia Cocoa Company (COLCACAO in Spanish) and PBEST Asesores Ltda. Currently, he is the Executive Director for the Corporation for Participative and Sustainable Development of Small Rural Producers (Corporación PBA). In this Project, he holds the Executive Secretary position, providing coordination support and advice for the creation of an agenda y the technical know-how necessary for decision making

Ecuador Team



Álvaro Montes,
Communications Manager

Álvaro has a degree in Social Communication for the Universidad del Valle and a master's degree in Information Technologies for Applied Education from the Universidad Pedagógica Nacional, Colombia. He has worked as a Journalist and Editor in several press and digital outlets and as a Consultant in Education and Rural Development. For this Project, Álvaro acts as a Consultant in communications, creating collaborations to spread and position the Group's work in Colombia.



Manuel Chiriboga,
Executive Secretary – RDG Ecuador

Manuel has a certificate in Developmental Economy from the Institute for Developing Countries. He also has a degree in Sociology from the University of Leuven, in Belgium. As Vice Minister of Agriculture and Livestock in Ecuador, between January and August 2003, he worked on issues about sectoral politics, business negotiations, rural development and information. He was the Executive Secretary for the Latin American Association of Promotion Organizations (ALOP in Spanish) and the Director for the Rural Development Program at the Ibero-American Institute for Cooperation in Agriculture (IICA). Manuel has also worked as a Consultant for international institutions such as the World Bank, International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), Inter-American Development Bank and the United Nations, as well as SELA, FAO and IICA, among others. In October 2008, he received the "Pfo Jaramillo Alvarado" award from FLACSO. He currently works as a Researcher for Rimisp –Ecuador office—and as the Executive Secretary for the Group on Rural Poverty and Development also in Ecuador.



Rafael Guerrero,
Executive Secretariat - Coordinator

Rafael has a degree in Philosophy from the Pontificia Universidad Católica del Ecuador (PUCE) in Quito. He has worked as a Researcher for the Research and Social Studies Center (CIESE in Spanish) and at the Andean Center for Popular Action (CAAP in Spanish). As a civil servant, he has held the post of Sub-secretary of Rural Development at the Ministry of Social Well-Being (2008-2009), as Coordinator for the Poverty Reduction Project and Local Development (PROCAL) in Ecuador, as Sub-secretary of Agriculture for the Central-South Coast with the Ministry of Agriculture (2010-2012), and as a Consultant for the Ministry of Agriculture (2013). He has also published articles about farmer organizations and movements in the magazine Ecuador Debate. He currently holds the position of Coordinator for the Rural Dialogue Group - Ecuador.



Brian Wallis,
Executive Secretariat - Coordinator
(until June 2011)

Brian has a degree in Political Science from the University of Maryland, USA, and a master's degree in Development Studies with a specialization in Local and Regional Development from the International Institute of Social Studies in The Hague, Netherlands. He has worked as a Consultant for strategic and program design in economic development with a territorial focus both in Ecuador and El Salvador for the USAID, Millennium Challenge Corporation. He has also worked as a Researcher for the Civil Society Knowledge Sharing Network. Since 2007, Brian has been a Professor of Local and Territorial Development in the Development Studies Program at the Latin American Department of Social Sciences in Ecuador. He is also a Professor at the School for Local Management at Fundación Esquel-FLACSO with the support of the Madrid community in order to strengthen the capacities of local authorities in territorial economic development and territorial planning issues.



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